

Remarks

The Office Action mailed July 17, 2003 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing remarks have been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-20 are now pending in this application. Claims 8-13 have been allowed. Claims 1, 14, and 20 stand rejected. Claims 2-7 and 15-19 stand objected to.

The objection to the drawings is respectfully traversed. Specifically, Applicants have correctly labeled Figures 2 and 3. Applicants are submitting one (1) replacement sheet of formal drawings incorporating the above-noted changes. No new matter has been added. For the reasons set forth above, Applicants request that the objections to the drawings be withdrawn and the replacement formal drawings approved.

The objection to the abstract due to informality is respectfully traversed. Specifically, Applicants have amended the abstract to recite "freezer section includes a door." For the reasons set forth above, Applicants request that the objections to the abstract be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1, 14, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ott et al. ("Ott") (US 4,851,662) is respectfully traversed.

Ott describes a side-by-side refrigerator (10) that includes a fresh food door (12) and a frozen foods door (14). The frozen food door includes a recess (18) wherein a through-the-door dispenser (16) for ice and water is positioned. The recess includes a photo cell (24) that is mounted on a bracket (26) and an operator actuatable toggle switch (28) and a light bulb (30) mounted on a partition (32). The photo cell is positioned to sense the ambient room light. A control circuit for the light bulb includes a parallel ice dispensing switch (36) and a water dispensing switch (38) which are connected in series with the light bulb. When either ice or water is dispensed, the recess is illuminated as long as the respective actuator lever arms (20, 22) are depressed. A photosensitive switch (40) is connected in parallel the toggle switch, the light bulb, and an AC power source, such that the photosensitive switch operates as an automatic night light when the toggle switch is closed thereby turning the light bulb automatically on at night. Notably, neither the control circuit nor the photosensitive switch operate to fade-out the light bulb, rather they are configured to actuate the light bulb on or off.

Claim 1 recites “a refrigerator comprising a fresh food section and a freezer section, at least one of said fresh food section and freezer section comprising a door comprising an external surface and an internal surface, and a light mounted to said external surface, said light electrically coupled to a processor-free light fade-out circuit.”

Ott does not describe or suggest a refrigerator including a fresh food section and a freezer section, wherein the at least one of fresh food section and freezer section include a door that includes an external surface and an internal surface, and a light mounted to the external surface, and wherein the light is electrically coupled to a processor-free light fade-out circuit. Specifically, Ott does not describe or suggest a refrigerator including a light electrically coupled to a processor-free light fade-out circuit. Rather, Ott describes a refrigerator door ice and fluid dispenser that includes a control circuit and a photosensitive switch configured to actuate a light bulb on or off in response to the dispenser use and presence or lack of ambient room light. For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Ott.

Claim 2-7 depend from Claim 1, and when the recitations of Claims 2-7 are considered with the recitations of Claim 1, Claims 2-7 are likewise submitted to be patentable over Ott.

Claim 14 recites “a method for de-energizing an appliance light, said method comprising providing a light bulb...providing a processor-free light fade-out circuit...and electrically coupling the light bulb to the processor-free light fade-out circuit such that the appliance light is de-energized using the processor-free light fade-out circuit.”

Ott does not describe or suggest a method for de-energizing an appliance light, wherein the method includes providing a light bulb, providing a processor-free light fade-out circuit, and electrically coupling the light bulb to the processor-free light fade-out circuit such that the appliance light is de-energized using the processor-free light fade-out circuit. Specifically, Ott does not describe or suggest a method for de-energizing an appliance light, wherein the method includes electrically coupling a light bulb to a processor-free light fade-out circuit such that the appliance light is de-energized using the processor-free light fade-out circuit. Rather, Ott describes a refrigerator door ice and fluid dispenser that includes a control circuit and a photosensitive switch configured to actuate a light bulb on or off in

response to the dispenser use and presence or lack of ambient room light. For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 14 is patentable over Ott.

Claim 15-20 depend from Claim 14, and when the recitations of Claims 15-20 are considered with the recitations of Claim 14, Claims 15-20 are likewise submitted to be patentable over Ott.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1, 14, and 20 be withdrawn.

The objection to Claims 2-7 and 15-19 is respectfully traversed. Claims 2-7 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 2-7 depend from independent Claim 1 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 2-7 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2-7 likewise are in condition for allowance.

Claims 15-19 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 15-19 depend from independent Claim 14 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 15-19 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 14, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 15-19 likewise are in condition for allowance.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants request that the objection to Claims 2-7 and 15-19 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas M. Fisher", written over a horizontal line.

Thomas M. Fisher
Registration No. 47,564
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070